

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04
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O R 231615Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3088
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T CAIRO 4985

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 11)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR EG PLO
SUBJ: GOE ASSESSMENT OF PNC

REF: CAIRO 4798

SUMMARY: GOE THINKS PNC TURNED OUT AS WELL AS COULD BE EXPECTED,
ALTHOUGH MFA DISAPPOINTED THAT IT FAILED REMOVE REJECTION
OF 242 FROM FINAL 15 POINT DECLARATION. WITH SWEEPING POLITICAL
MANDATE FOR EXCOMM EMBODIED IN UNPUBLISHED PLENARY RESOLUTION,
ARAFAT NOW REPORTEDLY BELIEVES HE CAN GO TO GENEVA IF HE NOT ASKED
EXPLICITLY ACCEPT 242 AND IF "PALESTINIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS"
APPEAR ON INVITATION OR AGENDA. ACCORDING EGYPTIAN VIEW,
ARAFAT HAS GAINED FROM PNC BOTH INCREASED
SELFCONFIDENCE AND WILL TO MAKE REQUISITE POLICY SHIFTS, BUT IS
HIGHLY RELUCTANT TO PLAY HIS "SINGLE CARD" (RECOGNITION)

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IN ABSENCE ASSURANCES ON HOW USG ENVISIONS PALESTINIAN HOME-
LAND. THERE IS NO GIVE WHATSOEVER IN MODERATES' INSISTENCE
THAT " SOVERIGN" WEST BANK/GZA STATE MUST BE ESTABLISHED PRIOR
TO CREATING LINK WITH JORDAN. GOE DECISIONS ON GENEVA WILL
NOT, HOWEVER, BE DICTATED BY PLO. END SUMMARY

1. FAHMY'S OFFICE DIRECTOR AL-BAZ GAVE EMBOFF BRIEFING MARCH 23

ON PNC.

2. BROAD EXCOMM MANDATE. AL-BAZ CONFIRMED EXISTENCE OF SWEEPING POLITICAL MANDATE FOR EXCOMM, WHICH NOT REFLECTED IN PNC'S FIFTEEN POINT DECLARATION. HE EXPLAINED MANDATE NOT CONTAINED IN SPECIALLY WRITTEN DOCUMENT (AS WE HAD PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED - REFTEL), BUT IN A RESOLUTION PLACED BEFORE PNC PLENARY IN CLOSED SESSION. RESOLUTION WORDED AS FOLLOWS: "PNC EXCOMM MAY TAKE WHATEVER DECISIONS IT DEEMS FIT IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE BY WHATEVER MEANS (NECESSARY)". AL-BAZ STRESSED THIS RESOLUTION IS UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN EXCOMM FREE TO TAKE ANY POLITICAL STEP SHORT OF FORMALLY AMENDING NATIONAL CHARTER. SINCE ONLY THREE NEGATIVE VOTES CAST, A DEGREE OF PFLP ACQUIESCENCE IS ON RECORD.

3. ARAFAT'S POSITION. ARAFAT HAS TOLD GOE THAT BASED ON THIS RESOLUTION, HE BELIEVES HE CAN GO TO GENEVA IF HE IS NOT RPT NOT ASKED TO EXPLICITLY ACCEPT 242. ASKED IF ARAFAT HAS EITHER THE COURAGE OR THE POWER TO MAKE SUCH KEY POLITICAL DECISIONS, AL-BAZ REPLIED THAT ARAFAT CLAIMS HE IN STRONG POSITION WITHIN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. EVIDENCE FOR THIS, AL-BAZ NOTES, WAS WAY HE KEPT CONFERENCE UNDER CONTROL, ESPECIALLY HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL FATAH REJECTIONISTS (COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD THIS FROM OTHER CONTACTS AS WELL). FURTHER, WHEN FAYIZ SAYIGH FORMALLY INTRODUCED RESOLUTION INSISTING PNC BE CONVOKED BEFORE ANY EXCOMM DECISION ON MEPC (I.E.. EQUIVALENT TO RETROGRESSION TO RETURN TO "ELEVENTH POINT" OF 1974), HE WAS VOTED DOWN BY PLENARY, THANKS TO ARAFAT'S FIRM STAGE MANAGEMENT.

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4. JORDAN LINK. MODERATE PALESTINIANS CONTINUE FIRM AS EVER ON CREATION OF SOVEREIGN WB/GAZA STATE, INSISTING LINK WITH JORDAN MUST COME AS SECOND STAGE.

5. PLO PARTICIPATION IN MEPC. ARAFAT NOW SAYS HE CAN PARTICIPATE IF HE GETS INVITATION WHICH REFERS TO "NATIONAL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN S"
OR HE IS ASSURED THAT "NATIONAL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS" IS AN AGENDA ITEM. AS NOTED ABOVE, HE CLAIMS HE CAN NOT GO, HOWEVER, IF HE MUST ACCEPT 242 EXPLICITLY. NEW ARTICLE 15 (REFTEL) INTENDED CONVEY NEW EMPHASIS ON DESIRE ATTEND, BUT IN CONTEXT 3236. EGYPTIANS DISAPPOINTED, AL-BAZ STRESSED, THAT FINAL DRAFT ARTICLE 1 CONTAINS RENEWED " REJECTION" OF 242; GOE HAD TRIED GET THIS TAKEN OUT, BUT FAILED.

6. NON-PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. ARAFAT STILL CONSIDERING VARIOUS DEVICES FOR ENSURING PALESTINIAN "RIGHTS" UPHELD AT MEPC. HE DOES NOT WISH ENTRUST THIS TO SARG OR GOE, AND CERTAINLY NOT TO HUSAIN. GRANTING OF A "POWER OF ATTORNEY" TO FOR

EXAMPLE, A UN DELEGATION OR TO EGYPTIAN MINWAR GAMASY
WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE, BUT NO REAL DECISIONS YET TAKEN BY ARAFAT.

7. EFFECT OF CLINTON SPEECH. AL-BAZ NOTED WRYLY THAT SOMETIMES
IT CAN BE USEFUL NOT TO BE FOREWARNED. WHEN PALESTINIANS CAME TO
HIM WITH NEWS TICKERS AND ASKED FOR EXPLANATION, HE REALIZED
SUSPICION EXISTED USG AND GOE HAD COOKED UP STATEMENT AND
DECIDED TIME IT FOR MAXIMUM EFFECT IN MIDDLE PNC. AL-ABLE DISABUSE
TEM IN GOOD CONSCIENCE. ARAFAT, AL-BAZ STRESSED, NOW WISHES HE
HAD NOT WELCOMED PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT SO WARMLY. HE WORRIED
ABOUT MEANING OF "HOMELAND", CHAFES AT "REFUGEE" CONTEXT, AND
CLAIMS HE DID NOT HAVE "FULL TEXT" WHEN HE GAVE INITIAL REACTION.
AL-BAZ SAID HE HAD TOLD PALESTINIANS IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HOMELAND
WAS ON WEST BANK/GAZA AND THAT THEY SHOULD STOP COMPANINING
AND QUIBBLING. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED HOW AL-BAZ HAD COME TO THIS
GEOGRAPHIC CONCLUSION, AL-BAZ SAID IT CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT BASING
HIS VIEWS ON BROOKINGS RECOMMENDATIONS. EMBOFF MADE NO COMMENT.
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8. FIFTEEN POINTS. AL-BAZ CONFIRMED OUR INTERPRETATION KEY
POINTS (REFTEL), SINGLING OUT ARTICLE 15 (RIGHT PARTICIPATE IN
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ON PALESTINE) AND ARTICLE 14 (FOR FIRST
TIME ADMITTING AND SANCTIONING CONTACTS WITH ANTI-ZIONIST ISRAELIS)
AS SIGNIFICANT MODERATE ACHIEVEMENTS BY ARAFAT.

9. OVERVIEW. IN GENERAL, GOE FAIRLY PLEASED WITH OUTCOME. ONLY
REAL DISAPPOINTMENT WAS INABILITY GET REJECTION 242 OUT OF
15 POINTS. GOE HAD HELD OUT NO HOPE FOR CHARTER REVISION.
WITH BROADENED EXCOMM MANDATE AND ARAFAT APPARENTLY IN MOOD TAKE
SME RISKS, GOE ENCOURAGED. GOE DECISION ON GENEVA WILL NOT,
HOWEVER, BE RULED BY PLO, AL-BAZ EMPHASIZED. (CANADIAN EMBOFF HAD
REPORTED TO US SIMILAR COMMENT MADE TO HIM MARCH 22 BY SYRIAN
AMB TO ARAB LEAGUE, WHO STRONGLY IMPLIED PLO FOOTDRAGGING WOULD NOT
AFFECT
SYRIAN DECISIONS ON ATTENDANCE.)

10. COMMENT: AL-BAZ HAD NO CONVINCING EXPLANATION FOR NON-
INCLUSION EXCOMM MANDATE IN PNC'S PUBLIC 15 POINTS. (HE CLAIMED
DECISION WAS "ADMINISTRATIVE", NOT POLITICAL.) THIS KIND
OF PUSILANIMITY DOES NOT SQUARE WITH ARAFAT'S PUTATIVE NEW
SELF-CONFIDENCE AND INCREASED CONTROL OVER RESISTENCE MOVEMENT.
WHEN EMBOFF READ DEPT SPOKESMAN'S REACTION TO PNC (NO
MOVEMENT ON RECOGNITION ISRAEL'S
EXISTENCE OR ACCEPTANCE 242), AL -BAZ OBSERVED GOE ALSO DISAPPOINT-
ED ON 242, BUT SAID IT UNREALISTIC EXPECT PALESTINIANS PLAY
"ONLY CARD" (RECOGNITION) WHEN THEY UNSURE OF US ATTITUDE TOWARD
THEM. EMBOFF OBSERVED PLO ENCHANT FOR BLAMING OTHER FOR
THEIR OWN SPINELESSNESS WAS NOT ONLY UNREALISTIC BUT SELF-
DEFEATING, AS RECENT SAUID EDITORIAL HAD POINTED OUT (JIDDA 2167).

11. ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHETHER ARAFAT WILLING TAKE POLITICAL RISK OF PERSONALLY INITIATING MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS FOR WHICH HE WILL NOT BE ABLE AVOID RESPONSIBILITY. IF GOE READING ACCURATE, HE DOES NOW WISH ATTEND GENEVA (ON HIS OWN TERMS OF COURSE), BUT LACKING
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DETAILS ON WHAT KIND OF "HOMELAND" USG ENVISIONS, HE VERY RELUCTANT PLAY HIS "RECOGNITION" CARD. UNFORTUNATELY, ARAFAT'S INSISTENCE ON ESTABLISHING " SOVEREIGN" WB/GAZA STATE PRIOR TO FORMALIZING JORDAN LINK DOES NOT REFLECT A HARD LINE POSITION. THIS ALMOST MYSTICAL FIXATION ON ENGAGING IN ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION IS APPARENTLY STRONGLY HELD BY EVEN MOST MODERATE OF FATAH MEMBERS.

12. AS SIDELIGHT TO ABOVE, WHEN I ASKED FAHMY THIS MORNING ABOUT REPORTED SECRET DOCUMENT DELEGATING WIDE AUTHORITY TO EXCOMM, HE CLAIMED TO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT (WHICH SEEMS TO BE LITERALLY CORRECT), BUT OFFERED TO INTRODUCE ME TO ARAFAT, WHO WAS WAITING TO SEE HIM, SO I COULD ASK HIM DIRECTLY. I DECLINED THE OFFER.
MATTHEWS

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